

Flexible Learning

2013

<i>SMS Code</i>	LT702001		
<i>Level</i>	7	<i>Credits</i>	10
<i>Total Learning Hours</i>	100	<i>Contact Hours</i>	40
<i>Directed Hours</i>	30	<i>Self Directed Hours</i>	30

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Introduction

Welcome to Flexible Learning. This course is offered in a blended format through a mix of onsite workshops, online computer conferencing, directed online learning and self-directed learning. Access to the online resources is through the wiki website: http://wikieducator.org/Flexible_Learning - The online discussions can be accessed on <http://moodle.op.ac.nz>. The timetable for the course topics plus the on-site and initial online workshops is on the next page.

Aim

To enhance the understanding of flexible teaching and learning principles and processes, and their application to the design of flexible learning practices.

Learning Outcomes

At the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explore and discuss principles and processes of flexible learning and teaching to facilitate culture sensitive adult learning and learner centred pedagogy;
2. Critique the design and application of existing flexible learning and teaching options in relation to the literature and work-based examples;
3. Identify and evaluate the multiple dimensions of flexible learning taking into account cultural diversity, sustainability and current educational trends;
4. Explore, design and justify strategies to enhance flexible learning and teaching in a practice context.

Assessment

There are two parts to this assessment:

1. **Design Blended Learning Strategies:** They can be used to offer blended learning opportunities in your classroom. **Due date:** 15 November 2013.
2. **Develop a Digital Learning Portfolio:** Use this to demonstrate your knowledge about the principles and processes of flexible learning. **Due date:** 15 November 2013.

Please note: you must request an extension before the due dates.

To pass this course: You must successfully complete both assessments to be awarded a *pass* in the course. Marks are not allocated for the assessments, only a pass or not passed. One re-submission is possible if a pass is not obtained the first time.

If intending to graduate in 2013: No extensions can be given for submitting assessments – the schedule will set the pace you need to maintain to finish on time.

Structure

Five main topics are covered and several sub-topics. The topics are listed in the order that they are covered on the course website. Due dates for activities (for formative feedback) and summative assessments are shown in Table 1. All the activities are designed to guide you with your summative assessments. It is beneficial if you complete the activities regularly so that the facilitator (and your peers) can give you feedback on your ideas and your work.

Table 1: Schedule of topics and assessments.

Weeks	Topics	Workshops	Activities & Assessments
1 – 2 5 – 18 August	Getting Started. What is Flexible Learning?	Onsite and online: Friday 9 August – venue D317 and adobe link.	Activities 1, 2 & 3.
3 - 4 19 August – 1 September	Diversity		Activity 4
5 - 6 2 – 15 September	Trends	Online session to be negotiated	Activity 5
7 16 – 22 September	Study course material and work on activities.		
8 - 10 23 September - 13 October	Sustainable Education	Online session to be negotiated.	Activities 6 & 7
11 – 13 14 October – 3 November	Strategies		Activity 8 – formative for Assessment 1
14 – 15 – Final weeks 4 – 15 November	Finalise assessment tasks	Online session to be negotiated.	Assessment 1 & 2 - summative

Instructions for Assessment 1: Design Blended Learning Strategies. Due date: 15 November.

Design and justify two strategies that can be used to offer blended learning in your classroom. To do this you will need an understanding of the broader concepts presented in the course. For example: the diversity of your learners and the factors that impact on their access to the learning environment. Activity 8 will assist with this assessment. Please submit the draft of this assessment, on the due date, for feedback, and include the revised final version in the Learning Portfolio (Assessment 2).

Steps in designing strategies for blended learning

1. Use the *Template for Blended Learning Strategies*, located on Moodle, to guide your design ideas – jot them down on the template before describing them more fully.
2. Describe the learning environment and your learners, in brief. (300 words.)
 - a. Course structure - content and resources, communication methods, learning activities and assessments, your measure of flexibility on the continuum (Casey & Wilson, 2005).
 - b. Learners – aspects of diversity, learning styles and preferences, abilities etc.
3. Identify barriers that may impede your learners' access to the learning environment, and explain why they are problematic. (200 words.)
4. Outline some solutions, using one or two of the dimensions of flexibility¹, that you believe may enhance access for your students to the learning environment. (200 words.)
5. Describe the design of two blended learning strategies, within these dimensions, considering: content, activities, communication/interactions and assessment. Discuss how they may enhance the learning experience, with justification of your choice (using evidence from the literature). (600 words.)

Instructions for Assessment 2: Develop a Digital Learning Portfolio (ePortfolio). Due date: 15 November.

Formative feedback is given as you complete the activities and develop the portfolio. Once you are satisfied it is complete and ready for marking, please email the facilitator with the link to your Learning Portfolio.

You are asked to record your progress using a digital Learning Portfolio. A digital portfolio can also be referred to an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). The portfolio is to be a record of what you learn about the

¹ Dimensions of flexibility - time, delivery and logistics, entry requirements, content and instructional approaches and resources (Casey & Wilson, 2005).

principles and processes of flexible learning and will include evidence that you compile and reflect on to demonstrate: your knowledge and understanding, your critical thinking about the subject, and how you are intending to apply this learning to your practice. It is particularly valuable if you make this portfolio available to others in the class as it gives you the opportunity to communicate, collaborate and share ideas and also receive peer feedback.

Instructions for the activities to guide the development of your portfolio are located in each of the topics on the course website (WikiEducator). A mix of written material and other media (images, audio, video, diagrams etc.) can be used as evidence in your portfolio. You can be as creative as you wish.

Steps in compiling a digital Learning Portfolio (ePortfolio)

1. Decide on a design for the Learning Portfolio using colours, perhaps a theme or metaphor, headings, and media that are appropriate and effective to demonstrate your learning progress – the look needs to be easy to follow, well-structured and professional in appearance.
2. Select a platform for the Learning Portfolio, and additional tools that are to be used to manage information, share evidence and to interact with others in class.
3. For each topic, submit the required evidence, and reflections as instructed – a mix of media can be used.
 - The activities will guide you in this.
 - Please use the Three-Step Reflective Framework to structure your reflections (a separate template is provided).

Possible platforms for the Learning Portfolio

A blog is the ideal platform for a Learning Portfolio, although lots of options are possible. For example, a wiki (PBworks, Wikispaces, WikiEducator) could also be used, or platforms such as Google documents (now on Google Drive), Google Sites or media sharing sites such as Flickr, Picasa, FaceBook and Youtube. All these sites have options for privacy if you do not wish to have an open portfolio, and you will need to specifically invite the class members and the lecturer to view your portfolio. The choice of platform depends on the type of Learning Portfolio you wish to develop. The Learning Portfolio can include text, video, images, audio recordings and links to information.

Reflective writing in your portfolio

Please use the Three-Step Reflective Framework and template to guide and structure your reflections and writing in your Learning Portfolio. (This was developed during Bronwyn Hegarty's Doctorate research.) Information and the template is provided on the course website.

Three-Step Reflective Framework in brief

- Step 1: Take notice & describe the experience - description of evidence – Description.
- Step 2: Analyse the experience - implications of your decisions, learning, reactions – Critical analysis.
- Step 3: Take action - Reflect on what you learned and how you will use this – Goals and Application.

Referencing and Academic Writing

Please use APA referencing 6th edition when citing and listing evidence from the literature in your reference list. Details about how to do this are on the course website. Structure your writing so that it is academically appropriate, well structured and professionally formatted. Guidelines for academic writing and study skills information can also be found on the course website in the **Resources** section.

Table 2: Rubric for marking Assessment 1 - Design Blended Learning Strategies.

Criteria	Met	Feedback
<p>1. Description of the learning environment and learners covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course structure - content and resources, communication methods, learning activities and assessments, a measure of flexibility on the continuum. • Learners – aspects of diversity, learning styles and preferences, abilities etc. 		
2. Identifies barriers that may impede learners' access to the learning environment, and explains why they are problematic.		
3. Outlines some appropriate solutions, using one or two of the dimensions of flexibility, that may enhance access for students to the learning environment.		
<p>4. Describes the design of two blended learning strategies, within the stated dimensions. Consideration given to: content, activities, communication/interactions and assessment.</p> <p>Discusses how the design may enhance the learning experience, with justification of the choice - using evidence from the literature.</p>		
<p>Referencing Correct APA referencing is used when citing in body of text and in reference list.</p>		
<p>Structure of the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing is well structured. ▪ Appropriate headings are used. ▪ Discussion is coherent and clear, explanations and terms are understandable. ▪ Correct grammar and punctuation is used. ▪ Formatting is professional. 		

Table 3: Rubric for marking Assessment 2 - Develop a Digital Learning Portfolio (ePortfolio).

Criteria	Met	Feedback
1. Design for the Learning Portfolio effective – easy to follow, well-structured and professional in appearance.		
2. An appropriate platform is selected. - additional tools are used to manage information, share evidence and to interact with others in class.		
3. Required evidence, and reflections are submitted for each topic – a mix of media is used.		
4. Writing demonstrates reflection: - thoughtful description of experience or evidence; - critical analysis; - awareness of learning; - setting of goals and application of learning.		
<p>Referencing Correct APA referencing is used when citing in body of text and in reference list.</p>		
<p>Structure of the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing is well structured. ▪ Appropriate headings are used. ▪ Discussion is coherent and clear, explanations and terms are understandable. ▪ Correct grammar and punctuation is used. ▪ Formatting is professional. 		